

GDANSK

A Tricity - three cities in one - GDANSK, GDYNIA & SOPOT



Today the path ahead lies clear, leading me to the sunset over a Tricity called GDANSK, and a shipyard which became the birthplace of solidarity in late August 1980.

A barbaric murder of a mayor caught within a current divide between the Polish people, he was assassinated on the 14th January 2019 whilst on stage at a charity event, murdered in front of his audience by a man only known as Stephen W.

The assassin was a man who had been previously convicted for a series of violent crimes and had served a prison sentence. He was also known to have had severe mental health problems. The “hate crime” that was committed as he believed it was his own party’s fault and had been solely responsible for his imprisonment.

THE JOURNEY OF GDANSK

As I reflect back to late August 1980 and a clement summer, GDANSK became the birthplace of The Solidarity Trade Union Movement after an attack by the Soviet Union in 1981 known as “**Exercise Zapad-81**”. It was the largest Soviet military exercise in history as amphibious landings were conducted near GDANSK. LECH WALESZA became the President of Poland in 1990-1995. He had been a car mechanic between 1961-1965 and then went on to serve in the army for two years, rising to the rank of Corporal. Lech Walesa then sought employment at the GDANSK shipyard as an electrician in 1967 and met his wife, Danuta Golos, and married her in 1969 and had eight children. Lech Walesa was a Catholic and used his Catholicism as his source of inspiration and strength, with the full support of the Catholic Church behind him, as Pope John Paul II supported him from the Vatican.

Lech was defeated in 1995 and quit politics in 2000, resigning from the Solidarity party in 2006. His words echoed across the party “This is no longer my union, this is a different era, different people and also different problems.”

After the assassination of Mayor Pawel Adamowicz, GDANSK was awarded **The Princess of Asturias award** in recognition that “the past and present in Gdansk are sensitive to solidarity, the defence of freedom and human rights, as well as to the preservation of peace”.

I have always received a warm greeting and response in Gdansk as I am regularly welcomed back by the hotel staff in the Radisson Blu hotel and always look forward to some laughter again often on a night out in GDANSK. My quest is to understand the Goldwasser liqueur “The drink of the city” that is believed to bring good luck to those who drink it.

My own personal choice is for a three night break and my desired location indeed at an extremely pleasing price for a 5 star hotel; in fact it costs less than a one night stay in comparison to London.

I dedicated a day to explore and, armed with leaflets on where to visit, my comfortable shoes were ready to walk the cobbled streets, absorbing every inch of a rather quirky place which was reflected in the architecture as the hours pleasantly surpassed.

The sight of St Mary's Church, where I stood and bowed my head in respect for Pawel Adamowicz, where his body is now placed, was beautiful.

Gdansk's architecture, culture and cuisine, alongside the abundance of activities fills my mind with so many things to do. Neptune's fountain is a historic landmark situated in the Dlugi Targ but most of all my sincere admiration is for a nation that has suffered but also strived for peace, brought home to me as I stood at a monument which symbolised the fallen heroes that had fought against a communist regime.